Camp~MARINE here is very narrow, and the vessel was moored with warps to the shore on both sides, and we had of river. But, owing to the rainy and squally state of the weather, returned to Escape the River, it being the intention of the 13th of May, having embarked the Government Resident, proceeded to ascend the Adelaide river, keeping a depth of twelve feet, but getting very narrow—not over twenty yards, and being almost blocked up with snags.

The same evening we were visited by a party of natives, who came again the next morning; but on this occasion were not allowed on board. I did not encourage their visits, as the river here is very narrow, and the vessel was moored with warps to the shore on both sides, and we had already seen something of their pilfering habits.

They belonged to the same tribe we had met before, and with whom the affair at the first camp had occurred. These natives having been sent away, we saw no more of them during this trip.

On the 19th, both boats left to explore the upper part of the river, the Government Resident going in Mr. Guy's boat.

After proceeding about fifteen sea miles above our anchorage, we camped for the night.

As I had to return to the vessel on the following morning, I pulled up a mile or two further, the river keeping a depth of twelve feet, but getting very narrow—not over twenty yards, and being almost blocked up with snags.

We obtained a good latitude position at our camping place, there being three observers, and on the following morning I returned to the vessel. Mr. Guy and the Government Resident proceeded towards the head of the river, but were only able to get about three sea miles above our camp in their boat, to a place a little way beyond where the river forked. They then followed its winding course on foot two miles further south to lat. 12° 56' 15" S. At this spot, the river had dwindled to a running brook four or five yards wide, with deep pools here and there. The country round was a level open grassy forest of gum, scrub, and paperbark trees, the banks of the stream being lined with tall bamboos. The enclosed tracing will give a good idea of the depth of water and course of the river, which would be navigable for a vessel drawing ten feet, and about 100 feet long about three sea miles above our May anchorage, when she would be stopped by the first bar of rocks, which are nearly dry at low water. Beyond this the white stemmed paperbark trees make their appearance, and get more numerous as the river is ascended, until in the long N.E. reaches near the upper end they are the prevailing feature of the banks, and make the river very snaggy. In May the water was slightly muddy at the ship and very good, but a few miles higher it was quite clear.

In ascending the river, and rounding the different reaches, the appearance of high woody land at the end of nearly every reach was a great contrast to the dead flat of the lower part of the river.

On the 24th of May, I visited a part of the Daly Range, about a mile north of Fred's Pass. The view of the country from which was splendid, the grass in the plains being yet quite green, and even where lately burnt off springing up again. The hill we were on had been burnt only a day or two previously, so that it had a most barren appearance, being composed entirely of masses of white flinty sandstone, which appeared harder than granite. All the hills on this range seemed rocky or stony. The summit was thickly clothed with stunted timber of various kinds and variety of foliage; on looking to the south-westward, over the range, we saw that the country continued hilly and thickly wooded as far as the eye could see. To the eastward stretched an immense plain dotted over with lines and groves of trees marking the course of some creek or the river itself—no part of the water of which could be seen.

On the 20th of May, a small party of natives, one man and four boys, came down on the east bank of the river. They belonged to a tribe we had not seen before. The man, after some time, ventured on board, crawling along one of the stern warps, and Mr. Guy succeeded in getting a photograph of him. This party seemed to understand bartering better than those farther north.
We weighed the same afternoon and arrived off Escape Cliff on the 28th of May. The same morning (28th), we had an interview with a large body of natives, who mounted in the full splendour of war, to view the schooner as she lay at anchor waiting for the ebb stream to take her out of the river. Two only swam off to the vessel, and were afterwards landed in the boat; they had been on board before, last year.

The Government Resident not being ready to proceed to the Victoria and coast south-west of Adam Bay for a month, I thought this a good opportunity to visit the Gulf of Carpenteria to carry out your orders, and accordingly sailed on the 5th of June.

The wind being strong from the eastward and south-eastward, we had to work to windward along the whole of the north coast of Arnhem’s Land, and down the Gulf of Carpenteria to Limmen’s Bight—this made it a long voyage. I had expected to make the passage in ten days, but such was the strength and steadiness of the wind and current against us, that we did not arrive off Beatrice Inlet, in the Limmen Bight, until the 20th June.

I enclose, for your Excellency’s Information, a tracing showing our route while in the Limmen Bight, and a tracing of our track along the north coast.

We sighted Port Essington and ran along the coast, getting a view of Port Bremer and Raffles Bay. Port Easting appeared a dangerous place to approach, Vashon Head and Port Smith being so much alike, and on our return passage, we nearly ran on shore attempting to run in after dark, having, as we thought, made out the entrance plainly at sunset.

The land eastward of Port Essington gradually rises, and seems to improve about Raffles Bay.

The wind being very strong from east-south-east, we tried to make a short cut by going through the strait between Mount Morris Bay, being a mere drain, with mangrove banks and numerous small branches. We pulled the boat up to view the schooner as she lay at anchor waiting for the ebb stream to take her out of the river. The wind was strong from the eastward and south-westward, one of which directions, one of which seemed completely cut up by large creeks running in all directions, one of which could be traced inland to the horizon, and which I at once concluded to be the Limmen Bight River.
The coast to the northward seemed thickly covered with low mangroves for some distance inland, through which ran many small creeks; inside appeared bare sand flats, extending to the north-west as far as we could see, with narrow slips of grassy land here and there. The whole country in this direction seemed a dead flat, subject to occasional inundations.

...the wind was blowing from the south-east, now blowing almost a gale; so, finding we could do no more with the theodolite, which required to be held in its place by the legs, and came to grief after all, breaking a level, we decided to go ashore at the rocks would allow us. The natives were firing the country close to the foot of the hill on the land side, but did not trouble us.

...a considerable quantity of mud and sand, we came to in smooth water. The motion at our former anchorages had been very easily obtained here.

...swamps dry at low water; and we had some difficulty in getting out of it. Particularly during the ebb tide.

Finding none. Before; and I have no doubt promising that I determined to proceed no further.

No. 5 for the present. I shifted the vessel from somewhere near.

...the coast to the south-east was intercepted a mile's distance by tall mangroves, and inland for miles, the main creek seemed a mere muddy water; dry at low water, and with iron stone pebbles mixed with its bottom of mud. The land round where there was an opening in the mangroves was low and sandy, and in places well grassed.

After leaving Spillen's Creek we ran along the coast to the north-west without seeing any opening we could take. Past a mangrove point with a sand spit in its north-west side inside, which appeared to be a creek, but at this time we could not get near it, the mouth being blocked up by breakers, extending nearly half a mile off shore. The coast was very low water, so we steered away towards some sand hills, the first we had seen on this coast. Having effected a landing under the highest (about fifty feet) I got a good view of the surrounding country from its summit. The view to the south-east was intercepted a mile's distance by tall mangroves, and inland for miles, and round to a west-north-west bearing appeared the bare flats I have before mentioned, some dry and with dense clouds of driving sand rushing over them, others partially flooded. There was a small tea tree scrub in shore of the sand hills with a salt swamp between, and from the presence of a few mimosa bushes at the foot of the hills I expect fresh water could be easily obtained here.

The only break to the dead level of the country in sight was a small range some twenty miles distant, in a S.W. direction, which I at once called Solitary Range. The coast looked so unpromising that I determined to proceed no further, if I found the latitude to be north of the fifteenth parallel. So the wind having fallen, we found our way into Sandhill Creek, where we passed the night. The mean of my star latitudes on the sand spit coming as near as possible 15° south, and having had the coast for three miles N.W. of it under my eye, I determined to return to the ship, having had enough for the present of mud and sand hills.

Sandhill Creek proved to run in a regular labyrinth of small mud drains and mangrove swamps dry at low water; and we had some difficulty in getting out of it.

On our getting well out from the land, I observed the schooner under weigh, running toward us. Mr. Guy having run down, thinking we might have some difficulty in getting so far to windward. We hoisted the boat up, and worked up under the lee of Maria Island, where we came to in smooth water. The motion at our former anchorages had been violent, particularly during the ebb tide.

The 28th, 29th, and 30th of June were spent in surveying Maria Island, wooding, &c. The island may be described as of good elevation, with a very stony soil, and covered with brushwood and coarse sandstone. In most of the flats fresh water had lain not long before; and I have no doubt a strict search would have enabled us to find some at present on the surface. In one place we found an old canoe, and late tracks of eight natives, but saw none.

... Maria Island on the 1st of July; and on the 5th, Mr. Guy explored No. 5 Creek, finding it very like all the others, with a muddy and sandy bottom, in some places mixed with iron-stone pebbles. Little now remained to be done, viz, to explore No. 3 Creek, and some of the branches of No. 2, which appeared to run towards the hills. Mr. Guy performed the former service, whilst I proceeded up Oyster Creek, which, after running to the southward four miles, and...
and sending off numerous small branches, became a drain about six feet wide between mangrove banks. By this means we managed to force the boat down the end of its course as a running stream. The country here was a decided improvement on any we had yet seen, though the soil was still very light and sandy, the grass looks very fine, and numerous large paperbark trees were scattered about, up one of which I got; and, seeing a dry sandy continuation of the creek we had it up with a man as fast as I could. This dry bed had only small salt water holes here and there. It ran over a sandy and rocky bed. I knocked up some of the rock, and found it of the same kind as that which forms Mount Young and the other hills. Here and there we came on holes filled with crystallized salt—showing that this part had not been flooded for some time. Most of the sandstone in the bed of the creek was impregnated with iron. We saw numerous native tracks crossing the bed of the creek. After getting to within half a mile of a stony hill of the same character as Mount Young, we retracted our steps as fast as we could, fearing the falling tide would leave our boat in the present undesirable position for the night. On our way back I picked up a small water-worn quartz pebble, broken into four pieces. This was the only piece of quartz I saw on the mainland, although I observed some among the rocks on Beatrice Islet.

We had some difficulty in getting our boat down the creek, the tide having fallen a foot, and managed to stave her, but not badly; the bottom of this creek had in places ironstone and other pebbles mixed with the sand and mud.

We camped for the night at the entrance of Cockatoo Creek, which we ascended next morning; it soon became very narrow and winding, but a rising tide enabled us to pole the boat to within a few hundred yards of its end, which we found in a sand flat not far from the foot of Mount Young.

After again visiting Mounts Young and Hummock, I returned to the boat and got on board the schooner the same evening.

Mr. Guy did not get back till the evening of the 6th, having ascertained the connection of Nos. 2, 3, and 4 creeks, and that No. 3 was the main outlet of the Limmen Bight River, which he had followed up in the boat for sixteen miles, where it was still nearly three-quarters of a mile wide. The various creeks he had explored generally ended in sand flats, and near the end of one he came on a fresh water hole; the bottoms of these creeks were sand or mud.

As there had been no recent rain, though I am sure we were generally watched, and at Spillen's Creek the natives had fires not half a mile from us. On every occasion of going on shore we kept a good look out for any traces of white men, but saw nothing which could lead us to suppose that either the islands or main land had been visited.

We had now been absent from Escape Cliffs for more than a month, and as Mr. Guy and myself were satisfied with our exploration so far, and that we could gain no more information without bringing more experience to bear than we felt could be expected, we determined to get back to Adam Bay as fast as we could. Had there been time we should have liked to have examined the coast up to the Roper, and tried to find a navigable entrance to that river.

Dr. Ninness did not accompany us to Limmen Bight, having stopped at Adam Bay to attend a man who had cut his throat whilst suffering from delirium tremens, and on the morning we sailed he started up the country to a sick man belonging to an exploring party at the Daly Ranges. During our stay in the Gulf of Carpentaria the weather was cool and bracing, and everybody on board enjoyed excellent health.

We reached Adam Bay on the 16th July, having been given up for lost or gone to Timor, by most of the party. On our return, the Beatrice was at once employed to take a survey party of over twenty men, their tents, stores, and two months' provisions, up the Adelaide, at the request of the Government Resident.

This occupied us till the 28th of July. Your Excellency will see by the tracing of the river that we landed the party higher up the river than we had before taken the Beatrice—the object being to get a good landing place and camping place close to.

The river banks here were rather steep and about ten feet above high water mark; we were about one and a-half miles below the limit of navigation for a vessel of our draught of water; the river was about forty yards across.

We filled up eight tons of water abreast the camp—hauling it up from alongside. It was very muddy for a day or two, but then became remarkably clear; we have been using it ever since, and it has always been quite clear and sweet.

From the 28th of July to the 5th of August we were employed busily wooding, painting, repairing sails, and refitting generally, which was much needed. During this period the natives murdered Alric Ward, the shepherd, in the middle of the day, and within sight and hearing of the camp. The natives had commenced their depredations two months previously, and had been getting gradually bolder—their last exploit being the thorough sacking of a tent at the Narrows Camp whilst its occupants were in another tent at breakfast.

The murder of Ward caused great consternation at the camp, and delayed our sailing for the Victoria some days. We employed the interval in surveying and soundings out the south channel through Clarence Straits, which we found to be good, though narrow, with deep water.

We left for the south-west coast, with the Government Resident on board, on the 12th of August, the Julia being in company.

We passed by Port Paterson (having before visited it, being within reach of Escape Cliff at any time by boat), and commenced our exploration in the bay north of Point Blaise. The morning of the 14th opening in a thick fog, the Government Resident left in the Julia to explore the coast close in; and in the afternoon we followed round the bay in the Beatrice, the coast proving very low, and fronted with mangroves, and the land inside apparently swampy for five or six miles inland.

Blaze Point was a low wooded point, with extensive rocky ledges extending more than a mile of shore. As the wind fell light towards sunset, and we began to feel the ebb stream setting strong to the northward, we came to off Blaze Point. Weighed at daylight, and commenced working down the bay outside the Peron Islands. We passed north of the mainland here from a distant view: it was very thickly wooded, and gradually rising towards Channel Point, where it attained a height of about eighty feet a short distance inland. The
UPPER PART
ADELAIDE RIVER,
As explored and surveyed byanas of
H.M. SURVEYING SHIP "BEAVER",
MAY, 1866.

Sounds are in feet, reduced to L. W. Sp.
Scales, 1 inch to a nautical mile of 6,048 feet.

Variation, 2° 56' E.

[Map of Adelaide River with annotations and survey details]

[Signatures: P. Howard and others]
TRACING FROM
SHEET IV.
NORTH-COAST OF AUSTRALIA.

BEING A NEW
Draft of Surveying Scheme "Australia"
by and from
ADAM BAY AND KINGDOM BAY.

FREDERICK HOUZEAU
The Peron Islands are sandy, with grassy sandhills along the west coast, and a grassy peak, at the north end of the northern island nearly 100 feet high. These islands have extensive reefs and sandbanks off their west sides, running out to a distance of two or three miles, outside which soundings are very uneven, and bottom rocky.

About sunset we brought up in Anson Bay in three and a half fathoms, about 3 miles north-west of Cliff Head, and found the flood stream setting east-south-east, and ebb west-north-west, during the night, about one knot per hour. At daylight next morning we observed a large opening on the east side of the bay, and continuing southward towards it, we was to find the appearance of a large river; but, soon getting into ten feet water had to bear up, and then steered for Channel Point, which we approached to within three miles when the water shoaling to two fathoms, we again retraced our track, halting to the wind and anchoring along shore to the southward, and always getting into shoal water some distance off the east side of the bay, till, at 10 a.m., we came to in eleven feet (low water), Cliff Head bearing south-east-by-south about two and a-half miles. The Government Resident then left in the Julia to explore the river, which we decided to call "The Daly," should it prove of any size. The ebb tide meeting the Julia in the entrance, they were only able to get up about four miles during the afternoon—the tide being very strong, although this was the period of neaps. The river at the Julia's first landing was about 600 yards broad, with four fathoms water at half ebb, and mangrove banks, and in all respects looking very like the lower reaches of the Adelaide.

A long, narrow mangrove island divided the entrance, the east channel part, which was the deepest. Numerous drift bamboos were lodged among the mangroves, proving the river to come from the land inland, and to be a fresh watercourse.

The shore or coast, between Channel Point and the mouth of the Daly River, consisted of a dense forest of mangroves, very high, with small creek openings here and there. From appearances, I should think that a ship channel will be discovered, from the mouth of the Daly running close in to the eastern shore of Anson Bay, and out to the northward, of Channel Point, and between Peron Islands and the main; although the Beavie, being on the west side of the shoals, could not get into it.

Cliff Head is a line of red cliffs, very like Escape Cliff, running along shore in about a south-west and north-north-east direction for more than a mile, and projecting very little, if at all; it is about fifty feet high, and the land behind rises to a height of about 120 feet, and then falls gradually; it is thickly wooded. Between Cliff Head and the Daly River the land is low, with a sandy beach.

A sand flat, dry at low water, extended off shore about half a mile, along this part of the coast. Southward of Cliff Head the land became low and apparently swampy, with mangroves inland behind the beach.

At daylight, on the 17th of August, we weighed and ran to the southward and south-westward for nine miles, about two miles off shore in three and four fathoms; the coast being very low and thickly wooded, with several high-water creek openings. We then came to another red cliff point, more deserving the name of head than the last, but not so high, with a curious flat-topped rock, about half a mile off shore, outside which we passed at a quarter of a mile distance, in three fathoms water. We then continued our course round Anson Bay, about one mile and a-half off shore, in two and a-half and three fathoms. The land was very low and thickly wooded. From the number of fires hereabout, I should think this part of the country must be thickly inhabited.

Anson Bay has been described as a fine harbor for shipping and free from shoals, and we found the water quite smooth and holding ground good, in this season and during the south-east monsoon; but from the appearance of the beach, I should think the westerly monsoon sent a heavy sea into the bay—a vessel might even then get temporary shelter by anchoring in the west corner, under Cape Ford. The east side of the bay appeared very shoal, and I expect, from December to March, there is a heavy break the whole distance from South Peron Island to Cliff Head.

Cape Ford we found to be a long low slim point, instead of the round, flat point it appears on the chart, of high land runs south from it, along the coast to the southward. For the first five or six miles south-west of Cape Ford the coast has a most barren look, consisting of high, bare sandhills.

Clump Point was low and sandy—a mere long sandspit, with a few low mangroves at its extremity, and a large clump of the same a little distance back; a dangerous covered reef extended some distance south-west of the point.

Between this point and Cape Dombey, the coast was thickly wooded; for a few miles south of Clump Point situated with low white sandhills, and then with occasional long lines of low reddish cliffs, under which ran a continuous sandy beach. At the north point of a shallow bay, about twelve miles south of Clump Point, the bottom was rocky and soundings uneven, and a rock or ledge breaking was observed about one and a-half miles off shore. We anchored about 9 p.m., a few miles north-west of Cape Dombey, and about half a mile outside a rocky ledge, marked "breaking" on the chart, but at present standing about five feet above water, and two or three hundred yards in diameter. We next morning proceeded to examine a bay between Cape Dombey and Port Keats, in which appeared a large opening on the chart; we found it, however, entirely closed up by a low mangrove flat, the only opening being a very small stream running into the sea at the east end of a long white cliff, and which had a sand bar right across it. At the north point of the bar, we observed the land breaking the sea, and looking swampy as we approached Tree Point, Port Keats, off the mouth of which inlet we anchored for the night.

Next morning, at low water, we saw we were anchored close to some very ugly-looking rocks, which, together with those off Tree Point and Cape Hay, would be very dangerous for large vessels entering. During the afternoon we ran into Port Keats with the sea breeze, and anchored five or six miles inside Tree Point. The shores of Port Keats looked exceedingly low and swampy, the only high land visible being Mount Goodwin to the southward, the navigable part
part of the port is low in several places. At our anchorage, the tide was rather too much across the channel to be pleasant.

Government Resident proceeded to the head of the port in the schooner Caffie, north-west to the point from which he anchored at 8 p.m. The coast between the above points appears nearly straight, with sandhills and cliffs in several places. At our anchorage, north west of Point Pearce, in seventeen fathoms, the ebb and flow stream ran north and south more than three knots per hour.

At 1 p.m. on the 21st we weighed with the first of the flood, and a light north-west breeze, and steered for the Victoria River. We tried to pass over Mermaid Spit, but the strength of the tide prevented us. At dusk we came to in eight fathoms, having regulated our course by sextant angles of the distant hills to the eastward, and at low water next morning finding we had made a very lucky hit, being right in mid channel between the sand heads. Point Pearce had been out of sight for three hours, and I am afraid the weather is but seldom clear enough to allow of its being even from the sand heads, and used as a leading mark. The dry sands had somewhat shifted and altered their shape since surveyed in 1840. At our anchorage the tidal streams set north-west by west and south-east by east, about four knots per hour, and rather too much across the channel to be pleasant.

At 1 p.m. on the 22d we weighed with the first of the flood, and a very light wind from north-east, which gradually hauled round by north to south-west.

The afternoon turned out very dull and misty, and brought out the dangers of the navigation. After passing the north-west end of Quoin Island, the tide seemed determined to set us north-west to keep our position. Here the water became quite calm and as smooth as glass, but the country seemed to improve; the sandstone ridges on the north side, though very broken, were clothed with grass, and the south side of the river was well wooded. The cliff on the chart close to Observation Island we never made out. When rounding the high rocky point of the Dome, the Government Resident and myself started up the river.

Next morning we proceeded up the river with a fresh south-east wind, and made good progress. The scenery was certainly very striking, but the rugged, barren ridges did not look well for a settlement.

We saw the gouty stem trees for the first time when rounding the high rocky point north of shoal reach, in which reach the Julie had her first little difficulty with some shoals, but soon got clear with the rising tide. As we advanced along the next reach, which trended east-north-east, the country seemed to improve; the sandstone ridges on the north side, though very broken and precipitous, were clothed with grass, and the south side of the river was low grassy land, gradually rising. We landed up a small creek on this side and walked about half mile inland. The cliff on the chart close to our anchorage is merely a perpendicular earthy bank, about 6 feet only would send a stream across the flat, from the mouth of the creek. We passed Mosquito Flat at high water and so got over the shoals, but with barely enough water for the Julie; and after getting a little bothered among the banks off the mouth of the large creek, east of Curiosity Peak, we came to in two fathoms, close to a detached hill, south-west by east of the Dome.

The cliff on the chart close to our anchorage is merely a perpendicular earthy bank, about six feet above high water. During the afternoon I went up the adjacent hill, about 600 feet high; it is quite a very narrow, and with high cliffs surrounding its summit. I had a good view over the whole of the Blunder Bay, and the Whirlwind Plains; the former was mere mangrove swamp, with some grassy land inside toward the foot of the hills; several creeks intersected the flat and drained it, and the dry part had very evident water marks across the surface. A rise of a few feet would extend a stream across the flat, from the Victoria Plains; former marks showing that the water would come in between Dome and the hill we were on.

Turning toward Whirlwind Plains, the part nearest us seemed very little above high water mark, but the country having been lately burned, the grass looked green and pleasant; beyond three or four miles the plains presented the appearance of a dense scrub, which appeared to extend...
extend to the south-east as far as the next range. The hill on which we were was nearly devoid of vegetation, except on its summit, which was flat and at each end of sufficient width to grow some small trees and a few tufts of grass; just under the perpendicular cliffs round the summit were some tall palms. The flood tide seemed to have some difficulty in getting past the shoals off Mosquito Flat, for we did not get it till 2 p.m. next day, when we started and passing along the foot of sea range, opened out on the long reach through which the Whirlwind Plains run, over which we proceeded about three miles, when we came to. The plain at the foot of the sea range was low, and covered with coarse grass very like that on the lower plains of the Adelaide; on the opposite side of the river was a long earthly or sand cliff crowned with an open scrub of small white-stemmed gum trees.

The general appearance of the Whirlwind Plains was very different from what I had expected; instead of open prairie land, covered with grass and with hardly a tree in sight, wherever I landed, which I did repeatedly, I found myself in what I should term an open grassy forest; the timber of which it was composed being almost invariably the peppermint gum common in South Australia; the greatest height which it attained here seemed about forty feet. The soil was of a deep brown color and sandy nature, and getting much lighter in color beneath the surface. The above description does not apply to more than half a mile inland from the river on either side, as I did not go beyond that distance at any time, and the wood was too thick to see more than 200 yards distant.

The river, in the long reach, was about 300 yards wide, and with scarcely any tidal stream, and about two feet rise. The east side was generally cliffy, showing the nature of the soil very well, and the west bank was fringed with a narrow, even wall of mangrove scrub about fifteen feet high.

Several very large gouty stem trees grew on the bank. On cutting into one with an axe, I found the interior very soft and juicy, or spongy, and quite white. I got a very good drink by sucking and chewing a large piece. It tasted like the juice of a ripe cocoa nut. We obtained some of the fruit, which was as the size of an emu's egg, with a green skin like that of a quince, but quite hard and about a tenth of an inch thick, inside which was a solid white spongy mass, quite dry and full of seeds;—this had a sweetish taste. I have no doubt this fruit is very good if gathered when just ripe; but those we got were evidently last year's, all the trees being without a vestige of foliage. Stokes says too, they were in blossom in November.

The plains near the river seem much cut up by watercourses in all directions. Nearly opposite the con• "White cliff" on Stokes's chart of the river, is a pebbly point behind which we came on a creek, which, from the trees growing in its bed, must run with fresh water in the rainy season—some of the men found a little. The white cliff opposite appears to have obtained its name from the grass growing down its face, which at this time of year would appear quite white by moonlight; but where it had been burnt off this cliff was exactly like the other; several pieces of limestone were picked up hereabout.

Sandy Island has a long pebbly spit off its south end, on which several of the men picked up some very pretty pieces of stone.

As we advanced up the river the banks seemed to get higher, and, for some miles before the Whirlwind Plains cease, were nearly fifty feet high.

On the 26th we left Whirlwind Plains and again were pulling along between hills; they were very steep, but covered with grass and wooded with peppermint. At eight p.m., whilst towing the Julia, we both came suddenly on a ridge of rocks, and, after getting clear, came to for the night; we were about two miles below Steep Head. On the morning of the 27th I landed on the south bank, and was surprised to find the watercourses full of limestone lumps, and afterwards to see the soil covered with small pieces of the same. I walked across the plain to the foot of the hills—dark sandy soil, with a variety of stones, including some large pieces of red Jasper; the grass was thick and, apparently, of very good quality. The country had not the cracked appearance of the Adelaide, but the rain seemed to collect in watercourses and drain off into the river.

After breakfast we succeeded in getting the Julia about half a mile further up, when she again dropped out of sight, and we were obliged to use our steam to gain her any higher. The Government Resident came into the gig, and, in company with the Julia's dingy, started for as far up as we could get.

Steep Head soon came in sight, its black face composed of laminated sandstone placed in horizontal strata. After landing to examine it, we proceeded for a short distance to where we came to a series of rocky bars extending nearly half a mile, over which we dragged the boat, and came into a fine deep reach, where the water was only slightly brackish, and a little rain higher up would make quite fresh. We pulled on through a reach about 100 yards broad, and looking like some of the upper reaches of the Adelaide, but wider. We pulled past an island, which leaves only a very narrow channel, just wide enough for the oars on its north side, and soon afterwards had to stop at what we supposed to be Palm Island—the river here coming to an abrupt termination as a continuous stream. The water here was quite fresh, so we filled all our breakers, the dingy also filling those she had brought from the Julia. The bar across the river here was composed of shingle, some of the stones being of large size. A number of trees grew in the bed of the river, mostly tea trees, some of large size, also plenty of palms and small scrub. Most of the tea trees, though of large size, were inclined at an angle, 45° with the water, in the direction of the stream, showing a powerful rush of water at certain times. I went on to the next reach, separated from the lower water by a bar about thirty yards across, composed of rock and shingle, and had a quiet bath some distance up, though not without some fear of alligators, as we had seen one just outside. The last reach reminded us very much of the Adelaide, having the same kind of willow-like paperbark or tea trees overhanging the stream; the country here seemed to be exactly the same. We saw, however, no bamboos in the whole course of the Victoria to this point; the land here, too, was much cut up by watercourses; the hills came close to the river and were very high and remarkable in form, steep and rocky, but covered with grass.
We returned to the Julia in the evening after a little difficulty in getting the boat over the rocky bars. Some of the men thought the water had fallen a few inches, but I could see no difference. In fact, the boat was deeper by thirty gallons than at 1 p.m. when we entered the Mosquito Flat Reach, and apparently in the centre of the channel, the Julia went on shore. As she only draws two feet six inches, and it was high water, we were rather surprised.

We remained by the Julia until the evening of the 39th, at which time there seemed no prospect of floating her off, the united efforts of the two crews failing to move her, when all her ballast and stores were out of her; each successive tide that occurred since she grounded having risen about six inches and fallen nine inches.

The river had evidently been shoaling up since Captain Stokes survey, as he had one fathom marked at low water, where we walked about quite dry at half tide; in fact, before we left, it was possible to walk right across the Victoria here at half tide from Mosquito Flat to within about 100 feet of the south shore without getting wet feet—myself and many others did it. Close to the south shore, however, existed a narrow channel of from three to five feet water, at low water neaps. This, however, is the channel of the Wickham Creek, and at low water springs can have no connection with the Victoria Proper. After we left her, each tide got lower, until the flood never reached her at all, and she was left high and dry during a whole day; showing that only the spring tides reach above Mosquito Flat. On our arrival on board on the 31st with the Government Resident, I sent Mr. Guy up to the Julia with a good supply of fresh water, and was very glad to see both boats back on the evening of the 3rd of September. A stiff sea breeze had sent up a high tide the previous day, and enabled the Julia to float off.

During the absence of the boats, the schooner had experienced very hot dry winds from south-east and clayey and muddy, and the rainfalls on the plains of the two rivers that blow cool to us up the same river, having to come over many miles of burning hot sandbanks, became heated to almost the temperature of an Adelaide hot wind.

Two or three cases of fever had occurred on board, and our boats' crew and self suffered from sore eyes, which soon got well when we got outside. We had been able to get a plentiful supply of very good firewood from Entrance Island—a sort of resinous pine, with hard sound wood of a teak color. This leads me to remark that the mangroves of the Victoria River are mighty healthy, not growing to a height of over six feet, and of no use whatever as fire wood. The writer of the Handbook of the Northern Territory must have been thinking of the Adelaide River, where the mangroves grow tall and straight like pines, and to a height of eighty and 100 feet without a branch, when he mentions the mangrove forests at the mouth of the Victoria; the fact being that the said forests are hardly visible from a ship's deck at four miles distance. I have generally found that sand kills off the mangrove trees altogether, and from its mouth to Palm Island the banks of the Victoria are sandy.

As a navigable river, I consider the Adelaide to be far superior to the Victoria. In the former, a vessel of the size and draught of the Beatrice can ascend nearly eighty miles, into fresh water, with perfect safety. In the Victoria, the same vessel could not get much farther than Holldest Bay, without great risk; and Mosquito Flat, at this season, is not passable by large boats except at spring tides. There is a great difference in the soil of the two rivers, the Adelaide being clayey and muddy, and the Victoria, sandy. I do not pretend to have any idea as to which is the best for this climate, but the land about the Victoria certainly looks the best, that is, above Mosquito Flat. I notice one great difference; whereas the water which falls on the plains of the Adelaide appears to remain stagnant, until dried up by the sun or filtered through the soil; the rainfalls on the Whirlwind Plains, and above them, seems to run at once off in violent torrents—which cause the numerous small but deep watercourses, I have spoken of before.

On the morning of the 4th September, we ran from Blunder Bay, with a fair wind, in company with the Julia, and got as far as the point off Forsyth Creek. The same evening, the tide having risen twenty-two feet, the Julia left us to make the best of her way back to Escape Cliff, the Government Resident going on with us to Timor. On the morning of the 5th, we started with a light breeze from north; and, after dodging a few shoal-looking places, managed to get well over, under the dry bank extending north-west of Quoin Island, and were drifted safely clear of the sandheads by the tide; the wind being very light. A north-west sea breeze, and the first of the flood carried us inshore about six miles south of Port Pearce, where we came to until sundown. When getting under weigh we observed the Julia standing out of Treachery Bay.

Next morning nothing was in sight, and we were fairly out on our present voyage. When we left Escape Cliff the party were all well, and so were the party up the river. Dr. Nimmo is now on board the Beatrice.

A stockade had been run up round the stores and Government House, and with sufficient space for the tents of the whole party inside. They all live inside now, with the exception of the stockmen, who have built a strong log hut, about a-quarter of a mile south of the camp, and close to the stockyard.

The natives continued to prow about the vicinity of Barrow Island, and caused partly from their lonely and isolated position, and having so little chance of getting away, or hearing of their friends. If their own statements are to be believed, more than two-thirds of the whole party are going to leave the first opportunity.

The day we left the Victoria, we had a case of scurvy break out among our crew, so I consider it shall be only just in time to prevent it spreading through the ship; the crew is very weak at present, but I expect a few days at Kupang will cure him completely.
We have now seen the whole coast south-west from Adam Bay to the boundary, and also several detached pieces along the coast to the eastward, and I must confess, without seeing any place superior or more adapted for a first settlement than the Adelaide River, with, perhaps, Port Darwin as a sea port.

As I think Adam Bay is likely still to continue to be the port of call for shipping bound to the Northern Territory, I propose to devote next spring to a detailed survey of Clarence Straits and the passages through the Vernon Islands, unless otherwise directed. Our proposed movements, after returning to Escape Cliffs, are to return immediately to Sourabaya (calling at Timor for letters), and there to refit and provision, getting back to Escape Cliff in February. From Sourabaya I hope to be able to forward a tracing of our running survey from Blaze Bay to Point Pearce, and a tracing of our soundings, entering and leaving the Victoria River.

I have the honor, &c.,

FREDERICK HOWARD,

To His Excellency Sir Dominick Daly, Governor-in-Chief,

Master, Royal Navy.

Adelaide, South Australia.